Draft
Environmental Assessment

Camp Baker
Smith River State Park
Host Site Development Project

September 2014

MONTANA
STATE PARKS
stateparks.mt.gov

Camp Baker
Smith River State Park
Host Site Development Project
Draft Environmental Assessment
MEPA, NEPA, MCA 23-1-110 CHECKLIST

PART I. PROPOSED ACTION DESCRIPTION

1. Type of proposed state action:

Montana State Parks (MSP), a division of Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks (FWP), proposes to develop a host site, consisting of one host pad and utilities, at Camp Baker in Smith River State Park. The project would include installation of a gravel pad for parking a Recreational Vehicle (RV), a graveled area for a picnic table and fire ring, water, phone, and electrical lines from the existing staff house, an underground septic holding tank and extension of the existing gravel access driveway.

2. Agency authority for the proposed action:

The 1939 Montana State Legislature passed MCA 23-1-101, which states that a State Park System would be established "for the purpose of conserving the scenic, historic, archeological, scientific and recreational resources of the state and providing for their use and enjoyment, thereby contributing to the cultural, recreational and economic life of the people and their health." Montana statute 23-1-102 (4) gives Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks (FWP) "jurisdiction, custody and control of all state parks, recreational areas, public camping grounds, historical sites and monuments."

3. Name of Project:

Camp Baker-Smith River State Park Host Site Development Project

4. Project Sponsor:

Montana State Parks, Region 4
4600 Giant Springs Road
Great Falls, Montana 59405

5. Anticipated Schedule:

Estimated Public Comment Period: September 2014
Estimated Decision Notice: October 2014
Estimated Commencement Date: Fall 2014
Estimated Completion Date: Fall 2014
Current Status of Project Design (% complete): 35%

6. Location affected by proposed action (county, range and township – included map):

Camp Baker is located in the southern portion of the Smith River State Park along the Smith River, approximately 25 miles northwest of White Sulfur Springs, Montana, in Meagher County, in the NW ¼ Section 13 Township 12 North, Range 4 East (Figures 1 and 2).

Figure 1. Smith River and Smith River State Park

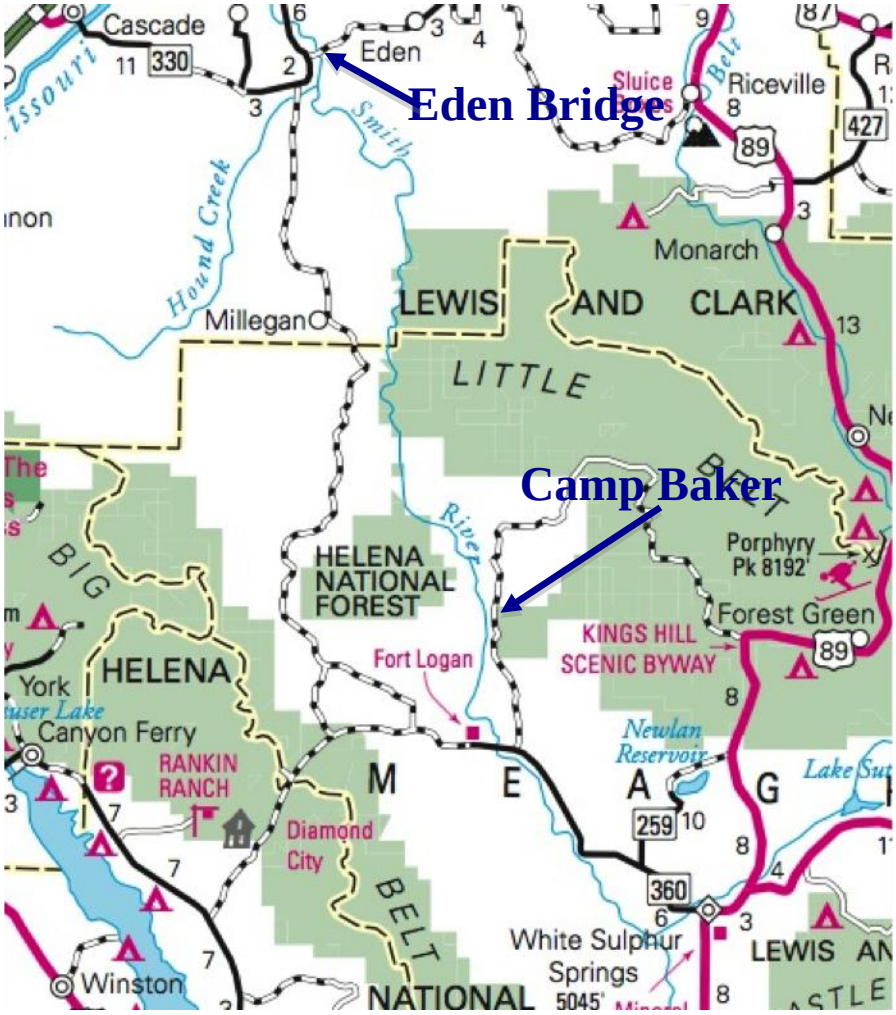
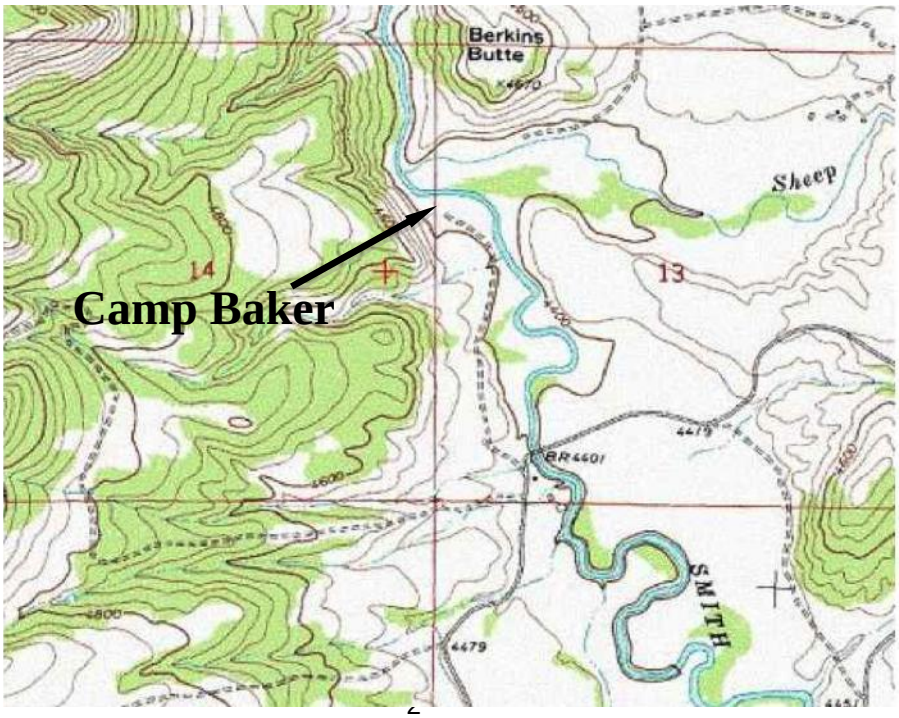


Figure 2. Topographic Map of Camp Baker – Smith River State Park.



7. Project size -- estimate the number of acres that would be directly affected that are currently:

	Acres		Acres
(a) Developed:		(d) Floodplain	0
Residential	0		
Industrial	0	(e) Productive:	
(existing shop area)		Irrigated cropland	0
(b) Open Space/	.5	Dry cropland	0
Woodlands/Recreation		Forestry	0
(c) Wetlands/Riparian	0	Rangeland	0
Areas		Other	0

8. Permits, Funding & Overlapping Jurisdiction.

(a) Permits: permits would be filed at least 2 weeks prior to project start.

Agency Name	Permits
Meagher County	Floodplain and Sanitation Permit
Meagher County	Approach

(b) Funding:

Agency Name	Funding Amount
Montana State Parks Earned Revenue Account	$20,000 (Bed Tax 2013)

(c) Other Overlapping or Additional Jurisdictional Responsibilities:

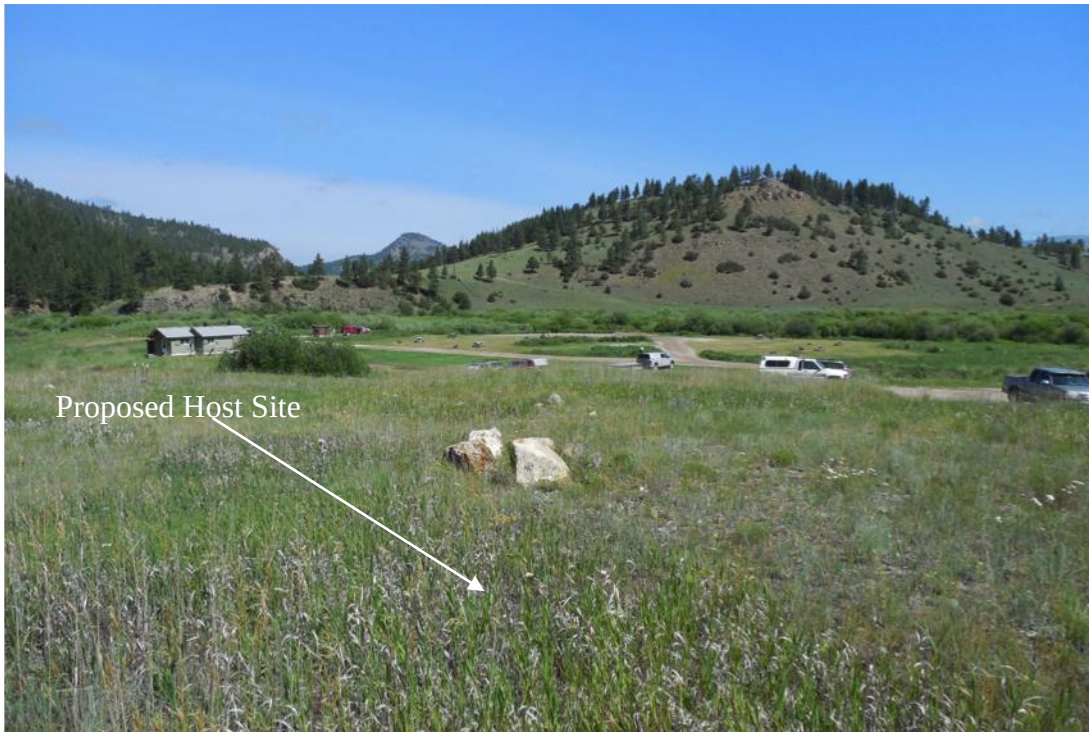
Agency Name	Type of Responsibility
Montana Natural Heritage Program	Native Species Report
Meagher County Weed District	Weed Management Coordination
State Historic Preservation Office	Cultural and Historic Resources

9. Narrative summary of the proposed action:

The nationally known Smith River offers a unique experience for visitors from all across Montana and the United States. For those visitors fortunate enough to draw a float permit, the 59-mile Smith River float holds an unforgettable adventure, with striking scenery in a pristine location. The 121-mile Smith River begins near White Sulfur Springs, Montana where the North and South forks of the Smith River merge. For much of its course, the main stem of the Smith River runs through a broad valley between the Big Belt Mountains on the west and the Little Belt and Castle Mountains on the east. From Camp Baker, the upper public access point to the canyon, the Smith River carries floaters through a deep, rock-walled passage with outstanding natural beauty and family friendly recreational opportunities including floating, camping, fishing, photography, nature study and wildlife viewing.

The Smith River State Park and River Corridor has one public put-in point (Camp Baker) and one take-out point (Eden Bridge) for the entire 59-mile stretch. The river is accessible only by non-motorized watercraft, including rafts, canoes, kayaks, and drift boats. Approximately 5,000 people per year float the Smith River and complete their multi-day float trip at the Eden Bridge take-out.

Figure 3. Location of Proposed Host Site



Proposed Action

During the peak float season of April through July, as many as 100 floaters per day launch watercraft at Camp Baker. Most visitors camp overnight before beginning their float the next day. In order to better serve the needs of floaters, improve site security, and assist the Park Rangers, MSP proposes to develop a host site at Camp Baker to accommodate a seasonal volunteer host. The proposed project would include: construction of a gravel pad approximately 35 feet by 12 feet for RV parking; construction of a graveled area adjacent to the RV pad with fire ring and picnic table; installation of buried water, electrical and phone lines from the existing staff house to the host site; installation of one underground 2000 gallon septic holding tank; and extension of the existing driveway to the RV pad (Figures 3 and 4).

Project Benefits

The volunteer host at Camp Baker would perform a variety of duties in support of Smith River State Park and the Park Rangers including, but not limited to, the following;

- Site security for 60 plus vehicles and trailers at a given time
- Assisting floaters entering the river
- Assisting rangers with registration of floaters and collection of float fees
- Site maintenance (cleaning/stocking vault latrines, grass mowing, tree trimming, weed control, litter patrol, recycling, etc.)
- Safety and orientation instruction for floaters
- Traffic and parking control
- Information sharing with Parks staff (incidents, wildlife encounters, hazards etc.)
- Maintaining the lost and found program
- Managing Enterprise merchandise (selling Smith River T-Shirts and future merchandise)
- Manage overnight camping use

Providing the basic amenities of a stable and level parking pad as well as convenient and reliable electricity, water, sewer and phone would greatly enhance the ability to attract and maintain quality volunteer hosts for the long-term. This would ensure a high quality experience for floaters as well as non-floating visitors.

Figure 4. Camp Baker Proposed Host Site Preliminary Concept Plan

10. Description and analysis of reasonable alternatives:

Alternative A: No Action

Camp Baker would continue to be operated without a seasonal, volunteer host. Park rangers would continue to perform all visitor use management functions at Camp Baker without the much-needed volunteer host support. Future attempts to recruit qualified volunteer hosts would be difficult due to inadequate accommodations, resulting in a substandard level of customer service, site security, and public safety.

Alternative B: Proposed Action

This is the preferred alternative. In order to better serve the needs of floaters, to improve site security, and to assist the Park Rangers, MSP proposes to develop a host site at Camp Baker to accommodate a seasonal, volunteer host, including a graveled RV pad, graveled picnic area, utilities, and extended gravel driveway. Recruiting and retaining qualified, long-term volunteer hosts would be more likely with this alternative, resulting in a higher level of customer service and site security.

11. Evaluation and listing of mitigation, stipulation, or other control measures enforceable by the agency or another government agency:

MSP would employ FWP Best Management Practices (BMP), which are designed to reduce or eliminate sediment delivery to waterways during construction. MSP would develop the final design and specifications for the Proposed Action. All county, state and federal permits listed in Part I 8(a) above would be obtained by MSP as required. A private contractor selected through the State's contracting processes would complete the construction.

PART II. ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW CHECKLIST

Evaluation of the impacts of the Proposed Action including secondary and cumulative impacts on the Physical and Human Environment.

A. PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT

1. LAND RESOURCES Will the proposed action result in:	IMPACT					
	Unknown	None	Minor	Potentially Significant	Can Impact Be Mitigated	Comment Index
a. Soil instability or changes in geologic substructure?		X				1a.
b. Disruption, displacement, erosion, compaction, moisture loss, or over-covering of soil, which would reduce productivity or fertility?			X		Yes	1b.
c. Destruction, covering or modification of any unique geologic or physical features?		X				1c.
d. Changes in siltation, deposition or erosion patterns that may modify the channel of a river or stream or the bed or shore of a lake?		X				1d.
e. Exposure of people or property to earthquakes, landslides, ground failure, or other natural hazard?		X				

1a. The Proposed Action would not affect existing soil patterns, structures, productivity, fertility, or instability. Soil and geologic substructure would remain stable during and after the proposed work.

1b. There would be some displacement and disruption of soil for construction of the RV pad and picnic area; excavation to bury the septic holding tank; soil scraping and leveling for the driveway extension; and trenching to bury new electrical, water, and phone lines to the RV utility pedestal. Two gravel layers would also be added to serve as the host RV pad. These impacts would be minor and temporary. Once the project is completed, the impacted surface soil would be reseeded with native grasses and rehabilitated to prevent new erosion patterns from becoming established. Best Management Practices (BMP) would be followed during all phases of construction to minimize erosion (see Appendix C).

1c. No unique or physical features would be altered by the Proposed Action.

1d. Minor amounts of sediment could enter the river during construction of the RV pad and picnic area, extension of the driveway, installation of the septic holding tank, and installation of power, water, and phone lines to the host site. However, upon completion, erosion and sedimentation to the river would be reduced.

2. **AIR** **Will the proposed action result in:**	**IMPACT ***					
	Unknown	**None**	**Minor**	**Potentially Significant**	**Can Impact Be Mitigated**	**Comment Index**
a. Emission of air pollutants or deterioration of ambient air quality? (Also see 13 (c).)			X		Yes	2a.
b. Creation of objectionable odors?			X		Yes	2b.
c. Alteration of air movement, moisture, or temperature patterns or any change in climate, either locally or regionally?		X				
d. Adverse effects on vegetation, including crops, due to increased emissions of pollutants?		X				
e. For P-R/D-J projects, will the project result in any discharge, which will conflict with federal or state air quality regulations?		N/A				

2a. Dust may be temporarily generated during the excavation and construction. However, this should only occur for a few days during the late fall and/or early spring months when no floaters are present and very few non-floaters are visiting the site. MSP would follow BMP's during all phases of construction to minimize risks and reduce dust. See Appendix C for the BMP. There would be a temporary increase in diesel exhaust from equipment used during construction. If the Proposed Action were implemented, odors from diesel exhaust would dissipate rapidly. These impacts would be short term and minor. The nearest neighbors are located approximately ¾ mile to the east and ¾ mile to the south and should not be affected due to prevailing wind patterns.

2b. The buried septic holding tank would be vented to releases gas buildup which could create objectionable odors. Ensuring that the venting stacks are oriented so that the prevailing winds would carry any odors away from the host pad and public campsites would mitigate any odors generated by the holding tank. Charcoal filters would also be installed on the vent stacks to reduce odors.

3. WATER Will the proposed action result in:	IMPACT					
	Unknown	None	Minor	Potentially Significant	Can Impact Be Mitigated	Comment Index
a. Discharge into surface water or any alteration of surface water quality including but not limited to temperature, dissolved oxygen or turbidity?		X				
b. Changes in drainage patterns or the rate and amount of surface runoff?		X				
c. Alteration of the course or magnitude of floodwater or other flows?		X				
d. Changes in the amount of surface water in any water body or creation of a new water body?		X				
e. Exposure of people or property to water related hazards such as flooding?		X				
f. Changes in the quality of groundwater?		X				
g. Changes in the quantity of groundwater?		X				
h. Increase in risk of contamination of surface or groundwater?			X		Yes	3h.
i. Effects on any existing water right or reservation?		X				
j. Effects on other water users as a result of any alteration in surface or groundwater quality?		X				
k. Effects on other users as a result of any alteration in surface or groundwater quantity?		X				
l. For P-R/D-J, will the project affect a designated floodplain? (Also see 3c.)		N/A				
m. For P-R/D-J, will the project result in any discharge that will affect federal or state water quality regulations? (Also see 3a.)		N/A				

3h. The project would involve burying a septic holding tank, which would pose a minor risk in contamination of groundwater, in the event that the tank would leak. This risk would be mitigated with routine maintenance and annual inspections of the holding tank. In addition, MSP would ensure that the tank possesses the proper safety features that indicate when the holding tank has reached capacity and needs to be pumped to prevent overflows. All local and State codes would be followed and all necessary permits would be obtained.

To mitigate the risk of contamination of the Smith River, the septic tank would have routine maintenance and inspections performed on an annual basis. In addition, the tank would be pumped as needed during the float season and again at the end of the season.

4. VEGETATION Will the proposed action result in?	IMPACT					
	Unknown	None	Minor	Potentially Significant	Can Impact Be Mitigated	Comment Index
a. Changes in the diversity, productivity or abundance of plant species (including trees, shrubs, grass, crops, and aquatic plants)?			X		Yes	4a.
b. Alteration of a plant community?		X				
c. Adverse effects on any unique, rare, threatened, or endangered species?		X				4c.
d. Reduction in acreage or productivity of any agricultural land?		X				
e. Establishment or spread of noxious weeds?			X		Yes	4e.
f. For P-R/D-J, will the project affect wetlands, or prime and unique farmland?		N/A				4f.
g. Other:						

4a./4b. The Proposed Action would have no impact on the plant diversity or productivity of the project site and would have a minor impact on plant abundance. No trees or shrubs would be removed during construction. Because the construction area is small, impacts from construction would be minor. Any area disturbed during construction would be reseeded with a native seed mix.

Vegetation found in the vicinity of the proposed project site consists of Rocky Mountain Lower Montane, Foothill, and Valley Grassland, as defined by the Montana Natural Heritage Program (MNHP). Idaho fescue, smooth brome, crested wheatgrass, prairie junegrass, needle-and-thread, hairy goldenaster, Missouri goldenrod, silky lupine, and fringed sagewort dominate the project site.

Construction of the RV pad and picnic area, extension of the driveway, and installation of the septic holding tank and power, water, and phone lines would disturb a small area adjacent to the existing ranger house and garage, which has been disturbed in the past by public use and an old cabin on the site.

4c. A search of the Montana Natural Heritage Program's (MNHP) species of concern database found no vascular or non-vascular plants Montana Species of Concern within the boundaries of Camp Baker – Smith River State Park.

4e. Leafy spurge, houndstongue, and spotted knapweed are the most common noxious weeds found at Camp Baker. Soils disturbed during construction could colonize with weeds. Areas disturbed by construction activities would be reseeded with a native reclamation seed mix where necessary to reduce the establishment of weeds. In conjunction with the Meagher County Weed District, MSP would continue implementing the Statewide Integrated Weed Management Plan using chemical, biological, and mechanical methods to control weeds on the property. Weed management would include the establishment of native vegetation to prevent the spread of weeds. Vehicles would be restricted to the parking areas and access roads, which would be maintained as weed-free, and vehicles would not be allowed on undisturbed areas of the site to minimize the spread of noxious weeds.

4f. A search of the MNHP database found that wetlands located along the Smith River at Camp Baker are classified as Freshwater Emergent and Freshwater Scrub-Shrub. No wetlands are located on the proposed project site.

5. FISH/WILDLIFE Will the proposed action result in:	IMPACT					
	Unknown	None	Minor	Potentially Significant	Can Impact Be Mitigated	Comment Index
a. Deterioration of critical fish or wildlife habitat?		X				5a.
b. Changes in the diversity or abundance of game animals or bird species?		X				5b.
c. Changes in the diversity or abundance of nongame species?		X				5c.
d. Introduction of new species into an area?		X				
e. Creation of a barrier to the migration or movement of animals?		X				
f. Adverse effects on any unique, rare, threatened, or endangered species?		X				5f.
g. Increase in conditions that stress wildlife populations or limit abundance (including harassment, legal or illegal harvest or other human activity)?		X				
h. For P-R/D-J, will the project be performed in any area in which T&E species are present, and will the project affect any T&E species or their habitat? (Also see 5f.)		N/A				
i. For P-R/D-J, will the project introduce or export any species not presently or historically occurring in the receiving location? (Also see 5d.)		N/A				

5a. The proposed project is designed to minimize impacts to wildlife habitat. No trees or shrubs would be removed for construction of the RV pad and picnic area, extension of the driveway, and installation of the septic holding tank and power, water, and phone lines. The proposed project site is not considered critical habitat for any fish or wildlife species.

5b./5c. Common wildlife species whose habitat distribution overlaps Camp Baker include mule and white-tailed deer, elk, pronghorn, moose, bighorn sheep, black bear, mountain lion, and bobcat. A wide variety of resident and migratory bird species use or travel through the area on a seasonal basis, including a variety of raptors, waterfowl, and songbirds.

Common game fish found in this stretch of the Smith River include brown trout, rainbow trout, and mountain whitefish. The Smith River, one of the most renowned streams in the United States for floating and fishing, is open to angling year-round downstream of the confluence of the North and South Forks, and use by anglers is heavy. According to recent surveys by FWP, the average angler days per year from 2003 to 2009 on the 57-mile stretch from Hound Creek (river mile 24) to Camp Baker (river mile 81) was 13,554, with a low of 8,375 in 2007 and a high of 18,100 in 2009. The regional ranking for this stretch of river averaged the 8th most fished body of water and the state ranking for this stretch of river averaged the 53rd most fished body of water in Montana.

During the construction phase of the proposed project, changes in diversity or abundance of game species (deer, elk, upland game birds, waterfowl) and nongame species (small mammals, birds) impacts would be minimal, if any. Once the project is complete, long-term impacts to fish, game and nongame species are not anticipated.

5f./5h. A search of the MNHP element occurrence database indicates occurrences of bald eagle, listed as Delisted and Being Monitored (DM) by the USFWS and Sensitive by the US Bureau of Land Management (BLM) and US Forest Service (USFS) within one mile of the Proposed Action site. No other occurrences of federally ranked animal or plant species have been found within the vicinity of the Proposed Action site. The search indicates that greater sage grouse and wolverine (both listed as Candidates for listing by the USFWS, Sensitive by BLM and Sensitive by USFS), westslope cutthroat trout (listed as Sensitive by BLM and Sensitive by USFS), and veery (Montana Species of Concern), have been observed in or near the Proposed Action site.

According to Adam Grove, FWP Wildlife Biologist, there are no active bald eagle nests within several miles of Camp Baker. While bald eagles were officially delisted in 2007, the USFWS has jurisdiction protecting this species under the Bald and Golden Eagle Protection Act (BGEPA) and the Migratory Bird Treaty Act (MBTA). The *Management Guidelines* of the Montana Bald Eagle Management Plan recommend seasonal restrictions from February 1 through August 15 for construction and maintenance of roads and trails, among other activities, within direct line of sight of an active nest. In addition, in the absence of a visual buffer, there should be a distance buffer of at least 1/4 mile from any construction of infrastructure, such as roads and trails. There should also be a 1/4-mile distance buffer for recreation during the breeding season. Because the nest is well over 1/4 mile from the construction site, the Proposed Action would not impact bald eagle nesting. In addition, any increased public use of Camp Baker would have no or minor impact on bald eagles as they have been accustomed to human activity from agriculture and recreation in the area for years. MSP would minimize the impacts from increased public use by implementing the recommendations outlined in the *Management Guidelines* of the Montana Bald Eagle Management Plan, including public education, signage, boating restrictions, and monitoring by FWP biologists.

According to Kristina Smucker, FWP Non-Game Wildlife Biologist, and Adam Grove, the nearest greater sage grouse lek is at least 5.5 miles from Camp Baker. Because Camp Baker does not provide preferred wolverine habitat, wolverine are unlikely to be found in the vicinity of the proposed project. Although veery prefer grassland habitats, it is unlikely that veery would be affected by the proposed project. . The proposed project is unlikely to have any negative impact on greater sage grouse, veery, or wolverine. Westslope cutthroat trout was observed in Eagle Creek, over one mile from the proposed project site. Because the project site is small and is over 400 feet from the Smith River, it is very unlikely that the proposed project would affect the aquatic habitat of the Smith River

According to Ty Smucker, FWP Wolf Management Specialist, Camp Baker is within the habitat of the gray wolf. Currently there are no radio-collared packs that have home ranges that overlap the project area. While it is possible for wolves to travel through the project area, none have been recently sighted in the immediate area of Camp Baker. The wolf population in Montana is strong and wolves may pass through just about any area including this site. According to Ty Smucker, FWP has no concerns with this project impacting gray wolves and no adverse impacts are anticipated from the proposed project on the wolf population.

B. HUMAN ENVIRONMENT

6. NOISE/ELECTRICAL EFFECTS Will the proposed action result in:	IMPACT					
	Unknown	None	Minor	Potentially Significant	Can Impact Be Mitigated	Comment Index
a. Increases in existing noise levels?			X		Yes	6a.
b. Exposure of people to serve or nuisance noise levels?			X		Yes	6b.
c. Creation of electrostatic or electromagnetic effects that could be detrimental to human health or property?		X				
d. Interference with radio or television reception and operation?		X				

6a. There would be temporary increases in noise levels caused by heavy equipment during the construction phase. However, construction would occur during the late fall and/or early spring months when no floaters are present and very few non-floaters are visiting the site.

6b. The closest neighbors, 3/4 mile to the south and 3/4 mile to the east, should hear little or no noise during construction. Noise levels would return to preexisting levels following construction.

7. LAND USE Will the proposed action result in:	IMPACT					
	Unknown	None	Minor	Potentially Significant	Can Impact Be Mitigated	Comment Index
a. Alteration of or interference with the productivity or profitability of the existing land use of an area?			X Positive			7a.
b. Conflicted with a designated natural area or area of unusual scientific or educational importance?		X				
c. Conflict with any existing land use whose presence would constrain or potentially prohibit the proposed action?		X				
d. Adverse effects on or relocation of residences?		X				

7a. The proposed project could provide improved management productivity of Camp Baker by improving floater registration, customer service, and public safety, security, and maintenance.

8. RISK/HEALTH HAZARDS Will the proposed action result in:	IMPACT					
	Unknown	None	Minor	Potentially Significant	Can Impact Be Mitigated	Comment Index
a. Risk of an explosion or release of hazardous substances (including, but not limited to oil, pesticides, chemicals, or radiation) in the event of an accident or other forms of disruption?			X		Yes	8a
b. Affect an existing emergency response or emergency evacuation plan, or create a need for a new plan?		X				
c. Creation of any human health hazard or potential hazard?			X		Yes	8c
d. For P-R/D-J, will any chemical toxicants be used? (Also see 8a)			N/A			

8a. The project involves burying one septic holding tank. Decomposition of certain wastes (i.e. fecal matter) releases gases which require venting. The buried septic holding tank would be properly vented to manage gas buildup. Routine inspections and annual maintenance of the septic holding tank would also be conducted.

8c. In the event that the buried septic tank developed a leak or overflowed, there would be a minor risk of contamination of groundwater and/or surface water. This risk can be mitigated with routine maintenance and annual inspections of the holding tank. In addition, MSP would ensure that the tank possessed the proper safety features that indicate when the holding tank has reached the capacity at which it need to be pumped, to prevent overflows.

9. COMMUNITY IMPACT Will the proposed action result in:	IMPACT					
	Unknown	None	Minor	Potentially Significant	Can Impact Be Mitigated	Comment Index
a. Alteration of the location, distribution, density, or growth rate of the human population of an area?		X				
b. Alteration of the social structure of a community?		X				
c. Alteration of the level or distribution of employment or community or personal income?		X				9c.
d. Changes in industrial or commercial activity?		X				9d.
e. Increased traffic hazards or effects on existing transportation facilities or patterns of movement of people and goods?		X				9e.

9c. The Proposed Action will improve recreational use of the area by improving customer service, site security, and public safety. This would benefit local retail and service businesses in White Sulfur Springs (Appendix B - Tourism Report; 2010 Montana State Parks Economic Impacts Study).

9d. There would be no change in commercial use of the site.

9e. The Proposed Action would have little or no impact on traffic.

10. PUBLIC SERVICES/TAXES/UTILITIES **Will the proposed action result in:**	**IMPACT**					
	Unknown	**None**	**Minor**	**Potentially Significant**	**Can Impact Be Mitigated**	**Comment Index**
a. Will the proposed action have an effect upon or result in a need for new or altered governmental services in any of the following areas: fire or police protection, schools, parks/recreational facilities, roads or other public maintenance, water supply, sewer or septic systems, solid waste disposal, health, or other governmental services? If any, specify:		X				
b. Will the proposed action have an effect upon the local or state tax base and revenues?		X				
c. Will the proposed action result in a need for new facilities or substantial alterations of any of the following utilities: electric power, natural gas, other fuel supply or distribution systems, or communications?			X		Yes	10c.
d. Will the proposed action result in increased use of any energy source?			X		Yes	10d.
e. Define projected revenue sources		X				
f. Define projected maintenance costs.			X		Yes	10f.

10c. The new electric, phone, and water lines would be trenched to a pedestal from the existing power and phone box and water line at the ranger house. Linear distance of these utility lines from the existing boxes to the new location is approximately 100 feet or less.

10d. There will be a minor increase in the use of electricity resulting from the operation of a high-pressure water pump to deliver water from the well and from personal use by the host.

10f. Annual maintenance costs are anticipated to increase from $500 to $1,000 per year. This increase in maintenance costs is primarily associated with the routine maintenance, inspection and pumping of the septic holding tank.

11. AESTHETICS/RECREATION Will the proposed action result in:	IMPACT					
	Unknown	None	Minor	Potentially Significant	Can Impact Be Mitigated	Comment Index
a. Alteration of any scenic vista or creation of an aesthetically offensive site or effect that is open to public view?			X		Yes	11a.
b. Alteration of the aesthetic character of a community or neighborhood?		X				
c. Alteration of the quality or quantity of recreational/tourism opportunities and settings? (Attach Tourism Report.)			X Positive		Yes	11c.
d. For P-R/D-J, will any designated or proposed wild or scenic rivers, trails or wilderness areas be impacted? (Also see 11a, 11c.)		N/A				

11a. Because the proposed project is located next to the existing ranger house, garage, and driveway, the proposed project would have no impact on the aesthetic character of Camp Baker.

11c. This project would not impact the quantity of recreation but would likely improve the quality of recreational opportunities through improved customer service, site security, and public safety.

12. CULTURAL/HISTORICAL RESOURCES Will the proposed action result in:	IMPACT					
	Unknown	None	Minor	Potentially Significant	Can Impact Be Mitigated	Comment Index
a. Destruction or alteration of any site, structure or object of prehistoric historic or paleontological importance?		X				12a
b. Physical change that would affect unique cultural values?		X				12b
c. Effects on existing religious or sacred uses of a site or area?		X				12c
d. For P-R/D-J, will the project affect historic or cultural resources? Attach SHPO letter of clearance.		N/A				

12a. In accordance with the Montana Antiquities Act (22-3-421 to 22-3-442) and with FWPs ARM rules (12.8.501 to 12.8.10), a heritage resource survey of the project area was conducted by Sara Scott, Parks Division Heritage Resource Program Specialist, in August of 2014. No sites were identified within the area but an archaeological site, a prehistoric chert quarry, was identified well outside the project boundary. The current project area is heavily disturbed by previous improvements and heavy recreational use. Based on the negative results of the project survey, the new improvements will have no effect on heritage resource sites. A report documenting the heritage survey and the site outside the project area will be prepared and sent to SHPO.

If previously undetected archaeological sites are uncovered during project construction, in accordance with MCA 22-3-435, the State Historic Preservation Office will be contacted and steps will be taken to ensure the preservation of the archaeological site until a professional archaeologist can evaluate it.

SIGNIFICANCE CRITERIA

13. SUMMARY EVALUATION OF SIGNIFICANCE Will the proposed action, considered as a whole:	IMPACT					
	Unknown	None	Minor	Potentially Significant	Can Impact Be Mitigated	Comment Index
a. Have impacts that are individually limited, but cumulatively considerable? (A project or program may result in impacts on two or more separate resources that create a significant effect when considered together or in total.)		X				
b. Involve potential risks or adverse effects, which are uncertain but extremely hazardous if they were to occur?		X				
c. Potentially conflict with the substantive requirements of any local, state, or federal law, regulation, standard or formal plan?		X				
d. Establish a precedent or likelihood that future actions with significant environmental impacts will be proposed?		X				
e. Generate substantial debate or controversy about the nature of the impacts that would be created?		X				
f. For P-R/D-J, is the project expected to have organized opposition or generate substantial public controversy? (Also see 13e.)		N/A				
g. For P-R/D-J, list any federal or state permits required.		N/A				

During construction of the proposed project, there will be minor and temporary impacts to the physical environment, but the impacts would be short-term and the improvements would benefit the recreational opportunities at Camp Baker over the long-term. The Proposed Action would have no negative cumulative effects on the biological, physical, and human environments. When considered over the long-term, the Proposed Action positively impacts the public's recreational use of the Smith River and the Smith River State Park and River Corridor, a nationally known and heavily used recreational river.

PART III. NARRATIVE EVALUATION AND COMMENT

During construction of the proposed project, there will be minor and temporary impacts to the physical environment, but the impacts would be short-term and the improvements would benefit the community and recreational opportunities over the long-term. The Proposed Action would have no negative cumulative effects on the biological, physical, and human environments. When considered over the long-term, the Proposed Action positively impacts the public's recreational use of the Smith River and the Smith River State Park and River Corridor, a nationally known and heavily used recreational river.

The minor impacts to the environment that were identified in the previous section are small in scale and would not influence the overall environment of the immediate area. The natural environment would continue to provide habitat to transient and permanent wildlife species and would be open to the public for river access.

The Proposed Action would not impact the local wildlife species that frequent the property and the project would be designed to avoid conditions that stress wildlife populations. Though bald eagle, greater sage grouse, veery, westslope cutthroat trout, and wolverine, Montana Species of Concern, have been observed in the vicinity of the proposed project site, the proposed project is unlikely to impact these species. None of these species are known to nest in the vicinity of the proposed project so fall or spring construction is unlikely to impact these species. In addition, these species are likely accustomed to disturbances from recreation, agriculture, and residential development that have occurred in the area for years. While it is possible for wolves to travel through the project area, none have been sighted and there is no pack located in the area, so it is unlikely that the Proposed Action would impact gray wolves.

Soils disturbed during construction could colonize with weeds. Disturbed areas would be reseeded with a native reclamation seed mix where necessary to reduce the establishment of weeds. In conjunction with Meagher County Weed Control District, MSP would continue implementing the Statewide Integrated Weed Management Plan using chemical, biological and mechanical methods to control weeds on the property.

The proposed project consists of developing a host site, including a gravel RV pad, gravel picnic area, water, electric, and phone service, a septic holding tank, and extended driveway. Recruiting and retaining qualified, long-term volunteer hosts would be more likely by providing a quality host site. The proposed improvements of Camp Baker – Smith River State Park would help provide a high-quality recreational experience for both floaters and non-floating visitors by improving customer service, site maintenance, and public safety. In addition, the proposed improvements would improve recreational opportunities for fishing, floating, camping, and wildlife viewing on the very popular and scenic Smith River.

This analysis did not reveal any significant individual or cumulative impacts to the physical or human environment. All minor impacts identified in this analysis can be mitigated.

PART IV. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

1. Public involvement:

The public would be notified in the following manners to comment on this current EA, the proposed action and alternatives:

- Two public notices in each of these papers: *Great Falls Tribune, Helena Independent Record.*
- One regional press release;
- Public notice on the Montana State Parks web page: www.stateparks.mt.gov

Copies of this environmental assessment would be distributed to the neighboring landowners and interested parties to ensure their knowledge of the proposed project. A copy of this EA

would be posted on the Montana State Parks webpage www.stateparks.mt.gov (Public Notices).

This level of public notice and participation is appropriate for a project of this scope having limited impacts, many of which can be mitigated.

2. Duration of comment period:

The public comment period would extend for (30) thirty days. Written comments would be accepted until 5:00 p.m. October 15, 2014 and can be mailed or emailed to the address below:

Camp Baker – Smith River State Park Proposed Host Site Development Project
c/o Colin Maas, Park Manager, Smith River State Park
4600 Giant Springs Rd
Great Falls, MT 59405

Or emailed through the website www.stateparks.mt.gov – click on "Public Notices".

PART V. EA PREPARATION

1. Based on the significance criteria evaluated in this EA, is an EIS required? (YES/NO)?
No

If an EIS is not required, explain why the EA is the appropriate level of analysis for this proposed action.
This environmental review revealed no significant negative impacts due to the proposed action, therefore an EIS is not necessary and an Environmental Assessment is the appropriate level of analysis.

2. Person(s) responsible for preparing the EA:

Colin Maas
Smith River State Park, Manager
4600 Giant Springs Rd
Great Falls, MT 59405
(406) 454-5857

Andrea Darling
Darling Natural Resource Consulting
39 Big Dipper Drive
Montana City, MT 59634

3. List of agencies or offices consulted during preparation of the EA:

Montana Department of Commerce – Tourism
Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks
- Design and Construction
  - Lands Unit
  - Legal Unit
- Enforcement Division
- Fisheries Division
- Parks Division
  - Heritage Resource Program
  - Park Operations Bureau

Wildlife Division
Montana Natural Heritage Program – Natural Resources Information System (NRIS)
Montana State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO)

APPENDICES

A. MCA 23-1-110 Project Qualification Checklist
B. Tourism Report – Department of Commerce
C. Fish, Wildlife and Parks Best Management Practices

APPENDIX A

23-1-110 MCA
PROJECT QUALIFICATION CHECKLIST

Date: August 5, 2014 **Person Reviewing:** Andrea Darling

Project Location: Camp Baker - Smith River State Park, located 25 miles northwest of White Sulfur Springs, Montana, Meagher County, NW ¼ Section 13, Township 12 North, Range 4 East.

Description of Proposed Work: Develop a host site area.

The following checklist is intended to be a guide for determining whether a proposed development or improvement is of enough significance to fall under 23-1-110 rules. (Please check P all that apply and comment as necessary.)

[ ] A. New roadway or trail built over undisturbed land?
Comments*: The existing driveway will be extended onto previously disturbed land.*

[ ] B. New building construction (buildings <100 sf and vault latrines exempt)?
Comments *:No building construction.*

[**X**] C. Any excavation of 20 c.y. or greater? *Yes*
Comments*: Excavation for one buried septic holding tank, trenching and burying of electrical, phone and water lines to a power pedestal, extension of the gravel driveway, and installation of the gravel RV pad and picnic area.*

[ ] D. New parking lots built over undisturbed land or expansion of existing lot that increases parking capacity by 25% or more?
Comments*:No new parking areas.*

[ ] E. Any new shoreline alteration that exceeds a doublewide boat ramp or handicapped fishing station?
Comments*: None*

[ ] F. Any new construction into lakes, reservoirs, or streams?
Comments*: None.*

[ ] G. Any new construction in an area with National Registry quality cultural artifacts (as determined by State Historical Preservation Office)?
Comments*: None.*

[ ] H. Any new above ground utility lines?
Comments*: No. The power, phone, and water lines would be buried.*

[ ] I. Any increase or decrease in campsites of 25% or more of an existing number of campsites?
Comments*: No new campsites.*

[ ] J. Proposed project significantly changes the existing features or use pattern; including effects of a series of individual projects?
Comments*: No.*

If any of the above are checked, 23-1-110 MCA rules apply to this proposed work and should be documented on the MEPA/HB495 CHECKLIST. Refer to MEPA/HB495 Cross Reference Summary for further assistance.

APPENDIX B
TOURISM REPORT
MONTANA ENVIRONMENTAL POLICY ACT (MEPA) & MCA 23-1-110

The Montana Department of Fish, Wildlife and Parks has initiated the review process as mandated by MCA 23-1-110 and the Montana Environmental Policy Act in its consideration of the project described below. As part of the review process, input and comments are being solicited. Please complete the project name and project description portions and submit this form to:

Carol Crockett, Visitor Services Manager
Montana Office of Tourism-Department of Commerce
301 S. Park Ave.
Helena, MT 59601

Project Name: Camp Baker-Smith River State Park Host Site Development Project

Project Description: Montana State Parks, a division of Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks, proposes to develop a host site, consisting of one host pad and utilities, at Camp Baker in Smith River State Park. The project would include installation of a gravel pad for parking a Recreational Vehicle (RV), a water line, phone line and power line from the existing ranger house, an underground septic holding tank, a picnic table and fire pit, and extension of the existing driveway.

1. Would this site development project have an impact on the tourism economy?
   NO **YES** If YES, briefly describe:

Yes, as described, the project has the potential to positively impact the tourism and recreation industry economy if properly maintained. We are assuming the agency has determined it has necessary funding for the on-going operations and maintenance once this project is complete.

2. Does this impending improvement alter the quality or quantity of recreation/tourism opportunities and settings?
   NO **YES** If YES, briefly describe:

Yes, as described, the project has the potential to improve quality and quantity of tourism and recreational opportunities if properly maintained. We are assuming the agency has determined it has necessary funding for the on-going operations and maintenance once this project is complete.

1. Signature Carol Crockett, Visitor Services Manager Date July 31, 2014

2/93
7/98sed

APPENDIX C
MONTANA FISH, WILDLIFE AND PARKS
BEST MANAGEMENT PRACTICES
10-02-02
Updated May 1, 2008

I. ROADS

A. Road Planning and location

1. Minimize the number of roads constructed at the FAS through comprehensive road planning, recognizing foreseeable future uses.
    a. Use existing roads, unless use of such roads would cause or aggravate an erosion problem.
2. Fit the road to the topography by locating roads on natural benches and following natural contours. Avoid long, steep road grades and narrow canyons.
3. Locate roads on stable geology, including well-drained soils and rock formations that tend to dip into the slope. Avoid slumps and slide-prone areas characterized by steep slopes, highly weathered bedrock, clay beds, concave slopes, hummocky topography, and rock layers that dip parallel to the slope. Avoid wet areas, including seeps, wetlands, wet meadows, and natural drainage channels.
4. Minimize the number of stream crossings.
    a. Choose stable stream crossing sites. "Stable" refers to streambanks with erosion-resistant materials and in hydrologically safe spots.

B. <u>Road Design</u>

1. Design roads to the minimum standard necessary to accommodate anticipated use and equipment. The need for higher engineering standards can be alleviated through proper road-use management. "Standard" refers to road width.
2. Design roads to minimize disruption of natural drainage patterns. Vary road grades to reduce concentrated flow in road drainage ditches, culverts, and on fill slopes and road surfaces.

C. <u>Drainage from Road Surface</u>

1. Provide adequate drainage from the surface of all permanent and temporary roads. Use outsloped, insloped or crowned roads, installing proper drainage features. Space road drainage features so peak flow on road surface or in ditches will not exceed their capacity.
    a. Outsloped roads provide means of dispersing water in a low-energy flow from the road surface. Outsloped roads are appropriate when fill slopes are stable, drainage will not flow directly into stream channels, and transportation safety can be met.
    b. For insloped roads, plan ditch gradients steep enough, generally greater than 2%, but less than 8%, to prevent sediment deposition and ditch erosion. The steeper gradients may be suitable for more stable soils; use the lower gradients for less stable soils.
    c. Design and install road surface drainage features at adequate spacing to control erosion; steeper gradients require more frequent drainage features. Properly constructed drain dips can be an economical method of road surface drainage. Construct drain dips deep enough into the sub-grade so that traffic will not obliterate them.
2. For ditch relief/culverts, construct stable catch basins at stable angles. Protect the inflow end of cross-drain culverts from plugging and armor if in erodible soil. Skewing ditch

relief culverts 20 to 30 degrees toward the inflow from the ditch will improve inlet efficiency.

3. Provide energy dissipators (rock piles, slash, log chunks, etc.) where necessary to reduce erosion at outlet of drainage features. Cross-drains, culverts, water bars, dips, and other drainage structures should not discharge onto erodible soils or fill slopes without outfall protection.
4. Route road drainage through adequate filtration zones, or other sediment-settling structures. Install road drainage features above stream crossings to route discharge into filtration zones before entering a stream.

D. Construction/Reconstruction

1. Stabilize erodible, exposed soils by seeding, compacting, riprapping, benching, mulching, or other suitable means.
2. At the toe of potentially erodible fill slopes, particularly near stream channels, pile slash in a row parallel to the road to trap sediment. When done concurrently with road construction, this is one method to effectively control sediment movement and it also provides an economical way of disposing of roadway slash. Limit the height, width and length of these "slash filter windrows" so not to impede wildlife movement. Sediment fabric fences or other methods may be used if effective.
3. Construct cut and fill slopes at stable angles to prevent sloughing and subsequent erosion.
4. Avoid incorporating potentially unstable woody debris in the fill portion of the road prism. Where possible, leave existing rooted trees or shrubs at the toe of the fill slope to stabilize the fill.
5. Place debris, overburden, and other waste materials associated with construction and maintenance activities in a location to avoid entry into streams. Include these waste areas in soil stabilization planning for the road.
6. When using existing roads, reconstruct only to the extent necessary to provide adequate drainage and safety; avoid disturbing stable road surfaces. Consider abandoning existing roads when their use would aggravate erosion.

E. Road Maintenance

1. Grade road surfaces only as often as necessary to maintain a stable running surface and to retain the original surface drainage.
2. Maintain erosion control features through periodic inspection and maintenance, including cleaning dips and cross-drains, repairing ditches, marking culvert inlets to aid in location, and clearing debris from culverts.
3. Avoid cutting the toe of cut slopes when grading roads, pulling ditches, or plowing snow.
4. Avoid using roads during wet periods if such use would likely damage the road drainage features. Consider gates, barricades or signs to limit use of roads during wet periods.

II. RECREATIONAL FACILITIES (parking areas, campsites, trails, ramps, restrooms)

A. Site Design

1. Design a site that best fits the topography, soil type, and stream character, while minimizing soil disturbance and economically accomplishing recreational objectives. Keep roads and parking lots at least 50 feet from water; if closer, mitigate with vegetative buffers as necessary.
2. Locate foot trails to avoid concentrating runoff and provide breaks in grade as needed. Locate trails and parking areas away from natural drainage systems and divert runoff to stable areas. Limit the grade of trails on unstable, saturated, highly erosive, or easily compacted soils

3. Scale the number of boat ramps, campsites, parking areas, bathroom facilities, etc. to be commensurate with existing and anticipated needs. Facilities should not invite such use that natural features will be degraded.
4. Provide adequate barriers to minimize off-road vehicle use

B. Maintenance: Soil Disturbance and Drainage

1. Maintenance operations minimize soil disturbance around parking lots, swimming areas and campsites, through proper placement and dispersal of such facilities or by reseeding disturbed ground. Drainage from such facilities should be promoted through proper grading.
2. Maintain adequate drainage for ramps by keeping side drains functional or by maintaining drainage of road surface above ramps or by crowning (on natural surfaces).
3. Maintain adequate drainage for trails. Use mitigating measures, such as water bars, wood chips, and grass seeding, to reduce erosion on trails.
4. When roads are abandoned during reconstruction or to implement site-control, they must be reseeded and provided with adequate drainage so that periodic maintenance is not required.

III. RAMPS AND STREAM CROSSINGS

A. Legal Requirements

1. Relevant permits must be obtained prior to building bridges across streams or boat ramps. Such permits include the SPA 124 permit, the COE 404 permit, and the DNRC Floodplain Development Permit.

B. Design Considerations

1. Placement of boat ramp should be such that boats can load and unload with out difficulty and the notch in the bank where the ramp was placed does not encourage bank erosion. Extensions of boat ramps beyond the natural bank can also encourage erosion.
2. Adjust the road grade or provide drainage features (e.g. rubber flaps) to reduce the concentration of road drainage to stream crossings and boat ramps. Direct drainage flow through an adequate filtration zone and away from the ramp or crossing through the use of gravel side-drains, crowning (on natural surfaces) or 30-degree angled grooves on concrete ramps.
3. Avoid unimproved stream crossings on permanent streams. On ephemeral streams, when a culvert or bridge is not feasible, locate drive-throughs on a stable, rocky portion of the stream channel.
4. Unimproved (non-concrete) ramps should only be used when the native soils are sufficiently gravelly or rocky to withstand the use at the site and to resist erosion.

C. Installation of Stream Crossings and Ramps

1. Minimize stream channel disturbances and related sediment problems during construction of road and installation of stream crossing structures. Do not place erodible material into stream channels. Remove stockpiled material from high water zones. Locate temporary construction bypass roads in locations where the stream course will have a minimal disturbance. Time the construction activities to protect fisheries and water quality.
2. Where ramps enter the stream channel, they should follow the natural streambed in order to avoid changing stream hydraulics and to optimize use of boat trailers.
3. Use culverts with a minimum diameter of 15 inches for permanent stream crossings and cross drains. Proper sizing of culverts may dictate a larger pipe and should be based on a 50-year flow recurrence interval. Install culverts to conform to the natural streambed and

slope on all perennial streams and on intermittent streams that support fish or that provide seasonal fish passage. Place culverts slightly below normal stream grade to avoid culvert outfall barriers. Do not alter stream channels upstream from culverts, unless necessary to protect fill or to prevent culvert blockage. Armor the inlet and/or outlet with rock or other suitable material where needed.

4. Prevent erosion of boat ramps and the affected streambank through proper placement (so as to not catch the stream current) and hardening (riprap or erosion resistant woody vegetation).
5. Maintain a 1-foot minimum cover for culverts 18-36 inches in diameter, and a cover of one-third diameter for larger culverts to prevent crushing by traffic.